

# Target Zero Awards

## Achievements in Traffic Safety

### 1. Category

- ☒ Impaired Driving
- ☒ Speed-Related Collisions
- ☒ Occupant Protection
- ☐ Run-Off-Road Collisions
- ☐ Intersection Collisions
- ☐ Traffic Data Systems

### 2. Entry Name

Project/Program Title: SR-20 Fatalities (POPS #06-0731-0042)  
Individual/Group Name: Detachment 3 / APA 31

### 3. Contact Information for person submitting entry

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### 4. Identify the project, program, or effort. This is the executive summary of the entry that describes

#### a) The situation or problem

In the early part of 2006, Captain James Lever challenged every sergeant and detachment to try and identify problem areas within their patrol areas to address the rising fatality crashes in District VII (Snohomish, Skagit, Island and Whatcom Counties). As a result of this, Detachment 3, Burlington, started to identify fatality collisions over the previous three years. During this evaluative process, there was one specific region identified as a target area that could have a significant impact in the overall fatality picture: State Route (SR) 20 from Milepost 89 to Milepost 157. This region is commonly identified as the Outpost region of Skagit County.

In order to effectively target this problem and maximize resources within Skagit County, Detachment 3 initiated the SR 20 POPS (Problem Orientated Public Safety) project. The purpose behind this project was to develop partnerships with other county and state agencies to aggressively target speeders, seat belt violators, and impaired drivers to eliminate fatality crashes on the target area.

In this region there was a continuing rise in overall fatality crashes. In 2003 there were zero fatalities in this area. In 2004 this number rose to three fatal collisions. In 2005 this number doubled again to six fatal collisions.

During this evaluative process, there were some key factors identified as either contributing mechanisms or identifying characteristics of the collisions. The characteristics identified were that all the fatal crashes involved males. The average age was about 40 years old. Six of the nine collisions occurred on Sunday, Monday, or Tuesday. There were three cars, three passenger trucks, and three motorcycles involved. The contributing factors for the nine fatal collisions over two years included:

1. Alcohol was a factor in three of the collisions.
2. Speed was a factor in three of the collisions.
3. Lack of seat belt use was a factor in three of the collisions.
4. In the motorcycle collisions, two were not wearing helmets.

#### **b) Actions taken**

As a result of these findings, Detachment 3 established a baseline and starting point to aggressively target these four factors. The first item on the agenda was to establish a strategic plan. In this strategic plan, the overall goal was to eliminate all fatal crashes on SR 20 between Milepost 89 and Milepost 157, and to eliminate all fatalities in the eastern part of the county to include county roads.

The next step taken was to address educational concerns. As part of this goal, Detachment 3, Detachment 11, District VII Motors, and the Skagit County Sheriff's Office, with cooperation from the Washington State Traffic Safety Commission, developed six posters to educate the public about these concerns. Detachment 3 distributed these posters along the SR 20 corridor to approximately 50 businesses.

The next step taken was to attend the SR 20 Safety Corridor Meetings (which focused their energy on SR 20 between Milepost 69 and Milepost 101) to express the area of concern on SR 20 and attempt to extend the corridor farther east. This endeavor was unsuccessful.

In order to educate the public even more about our upcoming enforcement practices and aggressive targeting of speed, seat belt, and DUI offenders, a town hall meeting was held at Concrete High School on May 24, 2007. This date was scheduled as a prelude to the pass opening, the first camping weekend, and Memorial Day weekend. It is important to note that the SR 20 pass typically closes around Thanksgiving weekend and reopens just before Memorial Day weekend.

The final piece to this puzzle was to take action and patrol SR 20 aggressively, starting from Sedro Woolley and working east to Milepost 157. A majority of our time was spent in the specific target region of Milepost 89 to Milepost 157. There

were numerous hours spent on patrol throughout the year, but there were three specific weekends targeted aggressively to deal with the fatality problem: Memorial Day, Labor Day, and Cascade Days.

During these emphasis patrols the following achievements were accomplished: 1,472 violators contacted, 1,172 speed contacts made, 145 seat belt contacts with 139 cited. There were 16 daytime DUIs arrested and 47 drug arrests made. One of these drug arrests resulted in the seizure of an active marijuana grow operation on Department of Natural Resources land.

### **c) The result**

This project had outstanding results for the residents of the eastern part of Skagit County. During the 2006 calendar year, there were no fatal collisions on SR 20 between Milepost 80 and Milepost 157 and no fatal collisions on SR 530 from the Snohomish County line to SR 20. Within the target area of eliminating all fatalities in the outpost region, there was one fatal collision on a county road (Burpee Hill Road), which is a two-lane roadway just north of the city of Concrete. This is a significant reduction from the previous year of six and even a greater reduction of the two-year total of nine.

## **5. Specify the proven strategies, best practices, or innovative strategies with a strong evaluation component used.**

This project focused on a holistic approach in addressing the rising problem of serious injury collisions and fatal collisions on SR20 between Milepost 89 and Milepost 157. This is an area that is primarily patrolled by one trooper, who is permanently assigned to the outpost position in New Halem. This poses significant challenges to address major problems in a geographic region such as this.

The holistic approach we took was involving multiple agencies such as the Washington State Traffic Safety Commission, the SR 20 Safety Corridor Team, the Skagit County Sheriff's Office, and multiple detachments within the Washington State Patrol. These tools were utilized in all phases of the project, which focused on education, media attention, and enforcement.

Prior to the start of the project, a town hall meeting was conducted, posters distributed, articles published in the Skagit Valley Herald, and numerous meetings held. During the project, there were meetings held to update the progress of the project and participation in the Concrete Day festival to demonstrate our support for the improvement of the community. At the conclusion of this project there was a town meeting held and a follow up article published in the Washington State Troopers magazine.

In the evaluation of this project, thorough data analysis, thanks to western region analyst Marcia Marsh, showed there was a 14% drop in all collisions, a 20% drop in

DUI-related collisions, a 24% drop in injury collisions, and zero fatality collisions on SR 20 between Milepost 80 and Milepost 157 and State Route 30 within Skagit County.